

## **Revised Minutes from 5/20/13 (open)**

Meeting convened on 5/20/13 in the Perryville Room at the Cecil County Administrative Building.

In attendance: Valerie Falcioni (chair), Bob Boonstoppel, Bruce Hemphill, Mike Dixon, and County Executive Tari Moore

County Executive Moore attended the meeting to address several issues. She first announced the dismissal of Walter Rozanski effective immediately, citing concern over the appearance of and a potential lack of objectivity while discharging his duties after reading, over a six month period, numerous postings made by Mr. Rozanski in Face Book and Cecil Daily that were highly critical of certain members of County leadership. She used Sec. 39-2 of the Cecil County Ethics Code as the basis for his dismissal. A letter of dismissal was hand delivered to Mr. Rozanski, and a copy of the letter was also given to the chair of the Commission. Executive Moore opened the floor to questions. A discussion ensued over the degree to which First Amendment rights should be allowed or restricted as a member of the Ethics Commission. Also asked was whether Mr. Rozanski should have been given warning before being dismissed. Executive Moore thought the reason for dismissal warranted immediate action in this case. She reiterated the importance of maintaining the appearance of neutrality, as any county official a Commission member publically criticizes could wind up being the subject of a complaint.

Other issues Executive Moore wanted to discuss included addressing the Commission's concerns about deficiencies in the law that exposes Ethic Commission members to serve at the pleasure of the County Executive. She acknowledged the need to better protect the independence and apolitical nature of the Ethic Commission. She stated that in addition to research being done by the County Attorney, she also valued feedback from the Commission as well. The Commission agreed to help the Executive in this matter. Executive Moore also requested that the Ethics Commission consider using a time frame for complaints

to be addressed. A sixty day turnover was suggested. One of the Commission members mentioned that complaints requiring investigation may necessarily take longer than sixty days to complete. The commission agreed to consider a revision to their protocol that would address this issue in a balanced way.

-The minutes from April 15, 2013 were read and approved unanimously by the Commission.

### **Old Business**

-Update on Status of Lobby registration: No response yet from the Chamber of Commerce to set up a time for conducting an education session with its members. A new coordinator had just been chosen and she wasn't yet settled into her job. Mike Ratchford was suggested as an alternate contact to arrange a date for a meeting.

-Update on Ethic training module: Bruce and Mike will get together between now and the next meeting to finish putting the module together. All that is needed is narration, which Bruce will do.

### **New Business**

No new business.

-Vote was unanimous to adjourn open session and to go into closed session pursuant to Chapter 10-508 of the Open Meeting Act to discuss an advisory opinion request and a complaint.